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**USTR RELEASES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE U.S. - CHILE FREE
TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)**

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced today its release of the draft environmental review of the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for public comment. The draft review is part of USTR's continuing implementation of Executive Order 13141 (Environmental Review of Trade Agreements) and its corresponding guidelines. The Executive Order, signed in 1999, was reaffirmed by President Bush in April 2001.

The draft review analyzes the environmental impact of the proposed FTA, including possible changes in trade flows and impacts on U.S. environmental regulations. Public comments on the draft review are intended to assist U.S. negotiators as they enter the final stages of the U.S.-Chile FTA negotiations. The public is encouraged to send comments by November 20, 2001, to allow negotiators to consider them during the final negotiating round to be held in late November. Once the U.S.-Chile FTA negotiations are complete, the environmental review will be finalized and made available to Congress and the public before submission of the Free Trade Agreement to Congress for approval.

The draft environmental review is available on the USTR website at
<http://www.ustr.gov/environment/environmental.shtml>.

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Background:

Executive Order 13141 (64 Fed. Reg. 63169, Nov. 18, 1999) institutionalizes the U.S. government's commitment to conduct environmental reviews of certain major trade agreements. The environmental review mechanism aims to "contribute to the broader goal of sustainable development" and "help identify potential environmental effects of trade agreements, both positive and negative." USTR and the White House Council on Environmental Quality oversee implementation of the Executive Order and the guidelines.

USTR initiated the environmental review process for the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement through the publication, on December 19, 2000, of a Federal Register notice, which also requested public comment on the scope of the review (65 Fed. Reg. 79442). Seventeen government agencies are participating in the review process, informed by input from advisory committees and public comments. Ongoing consultations were also conducted with the Congress, advisory committees, state and local government officials, and the public regarding potential environmental concerns and benefits associated with the FTA.

